

THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

CLOSE-UP REPORT

Thousands of dogs, unloved, starving, ill-housed; thousands of puppies, shipped like so much merchandise at too young an age; thousands of consumers, unknowingly buying sick dogs: these are the grim truths of the puppy-mill trade.



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PUPPY MILLS EXPOSED

Completely exposed to the blazing sun and the freezing rain and snow, puppy-mill dogs are bred and rebred repeatedly and live in foul, unsanitary conditions. Puppies born in such puppy mills are often ill, are infested with parasites, or suffer from congenital defects.



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federal officials who have done little or nothing to enforce existing legislation that would help alleviate the suffering of these animals, The HSUS took a bold step and announced a nationwide boycott of puppies from the six worst puppy-mill states—Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Iowa, and Nebraska. Our announcement set off an explosion of national attention and media coverage of the horrendous conditions at puppy mills and the problems associated with puppy-mill puppies. Kansas, a state with some of the worst puppy mills in the country, became the focus of a furor that threatened both its economy and national image. Pennsylvania found itself exposed as a puppy-mill state, too—and was added to the boycott—when HSUS investigators uncovered the existence of a thriving puppy-mill industry there. In California, a major market for puppy-mill puppies,

sales of those dogs dropped 40 percent. By the year's end, Kansas puppy mills were closing down, and Kansas animal shelters overflowed with dogs that had been turned in due to voluntary closings or raids, as the mounting public outcry forced Kansas officials to step up enforcement of its animal-welfare statutes. The pressure is on puppy mills, and The HSUS intends to keep it on. We want to end the suffering that has gone on so long.

A puppy mill is a nightmare come true. Hundreds of dogs may be crammed together in pens and cages, usually wire, completely exposed to heat and cold, the blazing sun, and the freezing rain and snow. Their excrement lies everywhere, contaminating food and water bowls and creating an overwhelming stench that permeates the air even in the coldest weather. HSUS investigators have docu-

mented hundreds of cases of abuse and ill-treatment of dogs at puppy mills, including starvation, lack of food and water, illness and disease, and lack of veterinary care. The dogs are kept for just one reason: to produce puppies. They are bred and rebred repeatedly, and, if their reproductive capacity wanes, they are ruthlessly culled. They may be left at a shelter, but the great majority are simply killed.

Puppy mills are institutions of cruelty—institutions that have been tacitly allowed to exist by the states in which they proliferate and by representatives of the federal government.

Although all fifty states have anticruelty laws that should prevent neglect and mistreatment of dogs in puppy mills, such laws are seldom enforced in rural areas, where most puppy mills are located. One estimate is that there are 5,000 puppy mills in the six midwestern states targeted by the HSUS boycott, breeding approximately 500,000 puppies annually.

There is also a federal law that protects puppy-mill dogs: the Animal Welfare Act (AWA), which requires wholesale commercial dealers to be licensed, inspected, and regulated to ensure humane standards of care. But the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the federal agency responsible for the AWA's enforcement, has been outrageously lax in its enforcement. Many of the worst puppy mills that HSUS investigators have seen, the ones with the most deplorable conditions, have been USDA licensed!

USDA inspectors, visiting puppy mills less than an hour after HSUS investigators have found numerous violations of AWA requirements, have reported nothing wrong. One USDA inspector even had her own puppy mill: the USDA knew about it, yet did nothing! Only after the HSUS boycott drew attention to the issue and the inspector's puppy mill was shown on ABC's "20/20" did she resign.

In 1984, the General Accounting Office, the investigative branch of the federal government, found major deficiencies in the enforcement of the AWA regulations concerning puppy mills. The USDA pledged to do better—and nothing happened. In 1989, the USDA created a new division, the Regulatory Enforcement/Animal Care Program (RE/AC), which was to work exclusively on animal welfare. It, too, has been a dismal failure. In RE/AC's first twelve months, there were fewer violation cases reported than in the previous twelve months!

The HSUS had been monitoring the USDA's poor performance and pushing for better enforcement of the AWA for over a decade. But, after years of apathetic performance and broken pledges, it was time to go straight to the consumer. Puppies from puppy mills are often ill, carry heavy loads of parasites—some types of which may be communicable to humans—or suffer from congenital defects. The time had come to tell the public, "Don't buy puppy-mill puppies!"

We announced our boycott in California in May, at press conferences in Los Angeles and Sacramento, where California Assemblyman Sam Farr joined HSUS President John A. Hoyt and called upon California consumers to boycott puppy-mill dogs. Farr released a report from the California Assembly Office of Research that showed

that a dog purchased in a pet store was three times more likely to be ill if it came from an out-of-state puppy-mill breeder than if it originated from a local California breeder. Hoyt charged, "The pet industry has acted as though these dogs are merely commodities to be shipped and marketed like refrigerators or toasters. And consumers unknowingly buy sick dogs. This is inexcusable."

The news conference, part of a presentation beamed by satellite throughout the nation, was covered by Cable News Network as well as by local stations across the country. NBC's

appeared on the "Geraldo" show, where he delivered powerful on-camera rebuttals to puppy-mill breeders' and brokers' claims that HSUS concerns about animal treatment were exaggerated. When one breeder tried to duck responsibility by blaming puppy-mill conditions on the USDA's poor enforcement of animal-welfare regulations, Baker responded that the USDA is like a police force; even if a policeman doesn't catch you breaking the law, you're still responsible for your actions.

Other national television shows ran puppy-mill segments



DARRYL YOUNG

HSUS investigator Bob Baker describes the horrors of puppy mills at the Los Angeles press conference at which HSUS President John A. Hoyt (far right) announced the HSUS boycott.

"Today Show" announced the boycott the morning of the news conference, and local TV stations were able to pick up HSUS footage of puppy mills from the satellite.

National television talk and news shows pursued the story and ran with it, tapping HSUS investigators as experts on the issue. In addition to appearing on the "20/20" segment, which showed moving shots of sick and frightened puppy-mill dogs, HSUS investigator Bob Baker

as well, including CBS's "Face to Face with Connie Chung," which featured HSUS President Hoyt, ABC's "Good Morning, America," and the "CBS Evening News." The print media also jumped on the boycott bandwagon; the wire services picked it up immediately, and the New York magazine *7 Days* ran an article that included quotes from Baker and photographs provided by The HSUS. A Gannett News Service puppy-mill story went nationwide and resulted in an

Maybe they thought they could continue to get away with it. Maybe they thought that, hidden as they were in sparsely populated, rural areas, no one would notice the squalid, filthy kennels and cages that house thousands of ill-treated dogs kept as breeding stock to supply the nation's pet stores with puppies. Maybe they thought law-enforcement officials would continue to turn a blind eye to their many violations of state and federal laws. Maybe they thought their traf-

fic in suffering and misery would continue unchallenged.

They were wrong. They—the mass commercial breeders who raise dogs in inhumane conditions—were wrong, because The HSUS has been fighting a relentless, non-stop battle against puppy mills for more than ten years and will continue to fight to help the suffering dogs and puppies that are the innocent victims of this cruel commerce. 1990 marked a turning point in our campaign. Frustrated by the apathy of state and

WE NEED YOUR HELP

editorial in *USA Today* blasting puppy mills.

All the publicity had a marked effect in Kansas, where Kansas Attorney General Bob Stephan's initial reaction was to call people who were concerned about inhumane conditions in Kansas puppy mills "bozos"; he declared, "Any self-respecting Kansan ought to tell them to go to hell." He soon had to change his tune, however, as the public made it clear that it did not share that attitude. Stephan, acting on the recommendations of HSUS Midwest Regional Director Wendell Maddox, agreed to a raid that closed down a Kansas puppy mill, and its owners were later convicted of cruelty to animals and violating the 1988 Kansas animal-dealers law. (This good law, which The HSUS had been instrumental in getting passed and was designed to ensure more humane treatment for dogs in puppy mills, has suffered from lack of enforcement and an apathetic attitude on the part of state officials.)

More raids followed: in August, 30 dogs were seized from an Arkansas City, Kansas, kennel; in October, 126 dogs were taken from a kennel in Ottawa, Kansas. This was promising action, but the Kansas legislature, attempting to cover up rather than clean up, had earlier enacted a law that makes it a felony to photograph a puppy-mill facility. This move will make future investigations more difficult and shift more responsibility to law-enforcement agencies, traditionally the worst prosecutors of animal-cruelty cases. It does not bode well for the dogs that continue to suffer in Kansas puppy mills,

but, through our boycott, we hope to pressure states, including Kansas, to enforce the animal regulations they have and to pass legislation where none exists. "If consumers make it unprofitable to breed puppies in these factories, we're confident these appalling conditions will end," says John A. Hoyt.

Through years of undercover investigations that have exposed conditions at hundreds of midwestern puppy mills, years of pressuring the USDA for better enforcement of the AWA, years of fighting to get good legislation passed to protect the animals trapped in the puppy-mill trade, The HSUS has proven its commitment to these suffering animals. We will continue to work on behalf of puppy-mill dogs (we still hope to force the USDA to enforce its regulations more vigorously) and to bring pressure to bear on state and federal officials to stop the mass production and exportation of sick and traumatized dogs. There must be vigorous enforcement of existing laws and regulations or the establishment of new requirements, if necessary, in order to close down puppy mills and ensure humane treatment of dogs trapped in commercial kennels. Through our boycott and the attention it has garnered, we've turned the spotlight on puppy mills; now it's time for them to clean up their act.

Support the HSUS boycott. Tell everyone not to buy pet-store dogs that come from Kansas, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Pennsylvania.

Write "Letters to the Editor" to your local newspapers, asking readers not to buy pet-store dogs from the boycotted states. Visit your local pet store to determine where it obtains its puppies. Don't be misled by claims that its dogs are not puppy-mill dogs. Insist on seeing the AKC papers or the interstate health certificate accompanying each puppy. While the existence of such documents does not guarantee the quality or health of a puppy, the papers will list the breeder's and/or wholesaler's name and address.

Contact your member of the U.S. House of Representatives and your two U.S. senators, asking them to urge the USDA to strictly enforce the Animal Welfare Act. This act requires commercial breeders raising dogs for pet stores to be licensed, regulated, and inspected by the USDA. Express your outrage that the USDA has been extremely negligent in the enforcement of the AWA. Members of Congress can be contacted: The Honorable _____, U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC 20510.

One of the worst puppy-mill states is Kansas. Write to Kansas governor Joan Finney, asking her to end the cruelty of puppy mills now. Suggest that she impose fees on puppy mills that could be used for enforcement of the Kansas law that regulates these facilities. Inform her that, until she takes action against these cruel breeding kennels, you will urge others to boycott Kansas dogs. Governor Finney's address is: State Capitol, Second Floor, Topeka, KS 66612.

Finally, help The HSUS continue its fight to help all animals that suffer at the hands of man—including those in puppy mills. Please use the enclosed postage-paid envelope to send your contribution today.



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